John Of St. Thomas' defense of St. Thomas and the Immaculate Conception

(Translated by CatholicHavoc)

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DISPUTATION ON THE ERRONEOUS PROPOSITIONS WHICH ARE OBJECTED AGAINST ST. THOMAS

The Apostolic See, through the mouth of Pope Clement VIII, renders us secure and certain that St. Thomas wrote without any error whatsoever, and therefore more keenly excites and inflames us to his defense, since we learn that we fight for truth and defend a just cause with the patronage of the authority of that supreme see. For it happens to the doctrine of St. Thomas what also happened to the doctrine of St. Augustine, whose most faithful follower and disciple he was, concerning which St. Prosper in the preface to the Chapters of the Gauls says thus: "The doctrine which Augustine, bishop of holy memory, apostolically asserted and committed to writing through many years against the Pelagians, enemies of Christ's grace and detractors of free will, seemed to some, either by not understanding it or by not wishing it to be understood, to be reprehensible. And as if providing this compendium of knowledge to those who were led by their judgment, they boasted that they had found things worthy of condemnation in the books of the aforementioned man, and they proclaimed them in brief summary chapters, and by such an invention both obtained detestation of him whom they attacked and averted the attention of the frightened reader from those things which they had defamed. Therefore, lest anyone rashly receive this persuasion and think that such a meaning is present in the writings of a Catholic doctor as those who vainly calumniate him display, I respond to the individual chapters which are marked with the title of reason with brief and complete profession, in nothing departing from the course of those definitions which are contained in the holy man's disputations, so that an examiner of even slight diligence may easily notice with what unjust reproaches the memory of the Catholic preacher is torn apart, and into what sin those fall who, moved by another's instigation, are more ready to blame than to know a writer of most celebrated name." Thus Prosper. Therefore this is our whole cause; for attacked by those things which we hear are boasted against the doctrine of

St. Thomas, a Catholic doctor and writer, and which we read are boasted by some, lest anyone rashly receive this persuasion and think that such a meaning is present in his writings as these calumnies display, I will attempt to respond to them in this disputation, and I will indicate in which author I have read them.

FIRST ARTICLE: The objections against St. Thomas are proposed

A twofold kind of propositions is alleged against St. Thomas. Some as erroneous or indefensible, others as worthy of being abandoned, as less suitable for explaining the faith and theology, or less well regarded in the schools.

CONCERNING THE FIRST KIND

I. First, it is objected that in the matter of the conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, St. Thomas put forth two things which today cannot be sustained. One, because he affirms that it is erroneous to say that anyone besides Christ was conceived without original sin. This censure is expressly against the determination of Sixtus IV, Pius V, the Council of Trent, and other supreme Pontiffs, who declared that it is not erroneous to say that the Blessed Virgin was preserved from original sin, and they prohibit any censure to the contrary. But that St. Thomas said this is clear from the First Part of the Second Part, question LXXXI, article III: "It must be said that according to the Catholic faith it must be firmly held that all men (except Christ alone) derived from Adam contract original sin; otherwise they would not need redemption through Christ, which is erroneous." The other thing which St. Thomas put forth is: "Because it is unknown at what time the Blessed Virgin was sanctified, the feast of her sanctification rather than of her conception is celebrated." Thus in the Second Part, question XXVII, article II. But this was reprobated by Gregory XV in a special decree, which prohibits that the name of sanctification be used in any way in the divine office, but rather conception.

These two propositions from St. Thomas are brought forth by the author of the Elucidarium of the Mother of God, book IV, tract V, page 969, as if objected by others. And offering judgment on these at page 973, he says that if the holy doctor had taught these propositions, his authority in this part would be weakened by the Apostolic See; but he says that the authority cited from the Third Part crept into the text of St. Thomas through fraud and corruption. But in the First Part of the Second Part he says that censure is not St. Thomas's but was unjustly declared by some. And St. Thomas only condemns what he infers as an inconvenience, namely that someone does not need redemption through Christ, but does not note with error that someone was conceived without sin.

II. Second, they object that the holy doctor said: "That simple vows do not make one religious," Second Part of the Second Part, question CLXXXIX, article II, to 1. Nor can anyone be considered religious through simple vows without solemn profession, nor should one be considered an apostate who falls back, which some believed to be the mind of St. Thomas. But this is rejected and condemned by Gregory XIII in the bull *Ascendente Domino*. Likewise that a simple vow of chastity in religion does not render invalid a marriage to be contracted, nor can it be invalidated except through solemn profession. The same author of the Elucidarium relates these propositions at page 77, column I. But St. Thomas teaches that proposition in the additions, question LIII, articles I and II.

III. Third, it is opposed that he said in the First Book, distinction XI, question I, article IV: "That the Father and Son can be called two spirators, just as also two spirating," the opposite of which he teaches in the First Part, question XXXVI, last article, to VII, which also was defined in the Council of Lyons under Gregory X, saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son by a single spiration. This proposition is reported by the same author in the same place.

IV. Fourth, St. Thomas in the Third Book, distinction VI, question II, says that that proposition of the Master of the Sentences: "The Son of God assumed a man," and that proposition: "That man began to be God, and God began to be man," although false, is nevertheless not heretical. And

yet St. Thomas himself in the Second Part, question II, article IV, at the end, says it is a heretical proposition and condemned in a Council; for, they say, that determination of the Council had escaped St. Thomas's notice. This is reported in the same place by the same author.

V. Fifth, God by absolute power cannot create another earth besides this one which we inhabit. Thus he has it in the First Part, question XLVII, last article, to the last. This is reported in the same place by the same author.

VI. Sixth, that a creature existing by absolute necessity is possible; which therefore could not not be, and would be God whose being alone is necessary. From St. Thomas in the Second Book against the Gentiles, chapter XXX. This is reported by that author in the same place.

VII. Seventh, that with a simple vow of poverty in religion, dominion of goods cannot cohere. The place where St. Thomas says this is not designated, but it seems to be Second Part of the Second Part, question CLXXXVI, article III, where however he only treats of solemn vows. But that proposition was condemned by Gregory XIII in the bull *Ascendente Domino*. This is reported by the same author in the same place.

VIII. Eighth, that Christ the Lord blessed bread and wine with no other words or in any other way than by consecration, and thus the blessing is not to be distinguished from consecration. Thus St. Thomas in the Third Part, question LXXVIII, article I, to the first. The opposite of which is signified in Trent, session XIII, chapter 1, and thus this opinion has been rejected by the schools. This is reported in the same place.

IX. Ninth, that the episcopate is not an order nor a sacrament. Thus St. Thomas in the Fourth Book, distinction XXIV, question III, article II, question II. And although many follow the same opinion, whom Vazquez relates in volume III, Third Part, disputation CCXL, chapter II, nevertheless others judge that in this time it is a dangerous opinion, because of the passage of the Council of Trent, session XXIII, chapter IV. This is reported in the same place.

The author of the Elucidarium reports these propositions from others, and subjecting his own judgment, he establishes that no condemned proposition has proceeded from the pen and mind of St. Thomas; if there is any, it crept in from time, from scribes, from printers. He does not wish to pass judgment whether all these propositions merit censure, and what kind; nevertheless he admits nothing sinister in the works of St. Thomas except from the corruption of manuscripts. With such fine urbanity and modest judgment, this is done so that those who saw or extracted so many (supposedly) censurable propositions in that book, and on the other hand, it is a ridiculous evasion to say that in all of them a faulty error occurred in the manuscripts of St. Thomas, when today they are in everyone's hands without other emendation. What finally can they judge, except that it was done with the authority of St. Thomas in books which we have as legitimate? For no others more corrected exist; and thus the judgment of the Apostolic See: "That he wrote without any error whatsoever," with so many errors, heresies published, is left to be hissed at and spit upon.

X. Tenth, he opposed St. Thomas because he said in the Third Part, question XXV, article III, to III, that the image of Christ is not to be adored with the adoration of latria. Which seems opposite to the determination of the Seventh Synod. In another impression of the same booklet it is held that the humanity of Christ is not to be adored with the adoration of latria, which is clearly against the same Synod, but St. Thomas does not have this.

XI. Eleventh, he affirms that a cleric, even if defending himself he kills another, remains irregular, Second Part of the Second Part, question LXIII, article VII, to III, although he does not intend to kill another but to defend himself. The opposite is defined in the single Clementine on homicide.

XII. Twelfth, he says in the First Part of the Second Part, question CII, article IV, to VI, that the propitiatory was a stone tablet. It is established that it was of purest gold, Exodus XXVII and XXXVII.

XIII. Thirteenth, that the solemnity of a vow consists in a certain consecration or spiritual formula pertaining to God which from apostolic

institution and divine law has the power of binding, Second Part of the Second Part, question LXXXVIII, article VII. The opposite is determined by Boniface VIII in the single chapter on vow and redemption of vow, and Gregory XIII in the bull *Ascendente Domino*, that it is from the institution of the Church alone.

XIV. Fourteenth, that from invalid espousals there does not arise an impediment of public honesty, in the Fourth Book, distinction XLI, single question, article I, question IV, to III. The opposite is determined by Alexander III in the chapter *Ad audientiam*, on espousals, and the same is held in the single chapter, same title, in the Sixth Book.

THE SECOND KIND OF PROPOSITIONS

Many are counted in this kind which pertain to philosophy, and yet are said to be indefensible or to be exiled from the schools. We will relate what the author of the Elucidarium relates in book IV, tract V, page 975.

I. First, St. Thomas in the Second Book, distinction II, question II, article II, to V says: That there is a divisible body and space between the heavens, nor are some continuous with others.

II. Second: He acknowledges only ten heavens in the Second Book, distinction XIV, article IV, to which an eleventh must be added, as is proved by astrological reasoning, and Thomists confess.

III. Third: That one body cannot be locally in two places, he says in the First Book, distinction XXXVII, question III, article II, and in the Fourth Book, distinction X, article I, to I. The opposite opinion is more suitable for explaining the Eucharistic mystery, and thus is abandoned by many Thomists.

IV. Fourth, he says it is more probable that the equinoctial zone is uninhabitable, First Part, question CII, article II, to IV. To which today manifest experience is contrary.

V. Fifth, he says: Two accidents of the same species are not in the same subject, First Part, question XCIV, article III, and First Part of the Second Part, question XCIII, article IV. Which many Thomists do not admit.

VI. Sixth: That the intensification of a quality occurs through greater rooting in the subject with no degree added, as he says in the Second Book, distinction XXXIV which is abandoned by many Thomists.

VII. Seventh: That there cannot be an instrument of creation, he affirms in the First Part, question XLV, article V, and in the Second Book against the Gentiles, chapter XXI, against what he had said in the Second Book, distinction I, question I, article III, where however he does not speak expressly of an instrument, nor from his own opinion but from the Master's. Yet this is not approved by many Thomists, who posit an instrument of repeated creation in transubstantiation.

VIII. Eighth, he often denies: That prime matter has its own existence, which most Thomists do not admit.

IX. Ninth, when something is generated from sacramental species, he teaches: That quantity remains there in place of matter with substantial form, and consequently worms thus generated are distinguished in species from others which have true matter, Third Part, question LXXVII, article V, and in the Fourth Book, distinction XII, question I, articles II and IV, against the Gentiles, chapter LXVI, from which opinion distinguished Thomists depart.

Finally, other opinions are heaped up, such as that individuation is taken from matter; that essence and existence are really distinguished; that the four internal senses are really distinguished; that when the motion of the heavens ceases, all sublunary things will cease; that the habit of knowledge is a simple quality and yet is extended. Which propositions nevertheless we willingly confess.

From theology he adds many others to which many Thomists judge one should not adhere. First, that an Angel is not in place as in a place, but as in something worked upon. Second, that it is not possible to produce two

Angels of the same species. That an Angel cannot sin in the first instant. That Angels only conjecturally know future contingent things that are not free. That what an Angel once apprehends, he can never omit. That God physically predetermines our free acts. That God knows future free things only conjecturally. That God does not know future conditionals except by conjecture. That merits do not revive. That for merit the act must be done from the motive of charity. That the first sin of a rational creature must necessarily be mortal. That one arriving at the use of reason is bound under mortal sin to make an act by which he converts himself to God. That supernatural habits are not increased except through more intense acts. That one character extends in diverse orders. That in Christ there were not habits infused per accidens. That the ultimate disposition in justification is elicited from the habit of charity. That it does not pertain to the articles of faith that God exists. That moral virtues are only in the sensitive appetite except for justice and prudence. That Christ does not exist except through uncreated existence. That the formal element of hypostatic union is a certain fiction. That in the consecration of the chalice those words are essential: "of the new and eternal Testament," etc., no less than the first: "This is the chalice of my blood."

Concerning these propositions, the author of the Elucidarium adds that many are contained in them either outside or against the mind of the Angelic Doctor; that there is no proposition of the holy doctor which cannot be very well explained and defended.

Other opinions are enumerated in the Cantabrian defense from folio 167, in which Thomists dissent, and he teaches which should be chosen even if many Thomists stand for another. Concerning which it is not to be treated in the present work, but we will treat of them in their places in theology; for in the present we only vindicate St. Thomas, not all Thomists.

Many of the aforementioned opinions or propositions are translated from those which Dermitius Thaddaeus brings forth in his *Nitela*, page 46. But besides those, only these few remain with him. First, that one existing in mortal sin, even occult, sins if he fraternally corrects from office. Second, that in man there is a single substantial form; for from this it follows that the

body of Christ living and dead was not the same, nor were the relics of the saints anything in them when they were living. Third, that the Church does not err in the canonization of saints is only piously believed. Fourth, that nothing can be mixed with the consecrated chalice, against the practice of the Greeks.

Second Article: Quis sensus D. Thomæ circa ea quæ Ecclesia docet de immaculata Virginis conceptione?

The Controversy Among Opposing Authors

This is among opposing authors the stronger engine which batters against the most solid wall of the doctrine of St. Thomas, and has roused many to the trumpet call, and has kindled no small anger of both sides in bringing forth or defeating one or the other opinion.

Wherefore the Roman Pontiffs have been compelled by repeated edicts to prohibit public disputations in this matter, and finally silence has been imposed upon the affirmative party, and it has been ordered that those who follow the pious opinion should not attack the other, nor act concerning it or treat it in any way. Thus Paul V and Gregory XV, in their constitutions for the immaculate conception.

However, Gregory XV himself excepts from this silence the brothers of the Order of Preachers, so that they may lawfully treat of it among themselves and not with others, as is established from the bull which begins: *Eximii et singulares fructus*, July 28, in the year 1622.

The Limits of Discussion

Therefore we are not permitted to treat or act concerning anything about the opinion affirming the contraction of sin; however, it is permitted for the Church to present here also the meaning which the Apostolic See proposes to all, and to explain what St. Thomas thought, and just as he is brought forward by other authors for their meaning, so it will be permitted for us to investigate his true meaning, touching nothing of the opinion itself.

HOW SOBERLY THE CHURCH SPEAKS IN THIS MYSTERY

The Church, governed and instructed by the Holy Spirit, venerates this hidden mystery with the highest piety in such a way that nevertheless it proceeds and speaks with great moderation in a matter of such great importance, and wishes to be so understood by its faithful.

i. The Article Not Yet Defined

First, therefore, the Pontiffs teach and testify that this article has not yet been defined or declared by the Apostolic See. Thus Sixtus IV, in the extravagant *Grave mentis*; Pius V, in the constitution which begins *Super speculum*; Gregory XV, to be cited below.

Whence what some bring forward from a certain decree of the Council of Basel, in session XXXVI, in which it is defined that the pious opinion concerning the immaculate conception of the Virgin is more probable, it is established to lack all authority, both because that Council was already in that session headless and separated from the true and legitimate Pontiff Eugene IV, and also because Sixtus IV, who came after that Council, and his other successors expressly teach that this article has not yet been declared by the Apostolic See. Therefore, as to this, that decree of Basel was never admitted nor confirmed.

ii. The Apostolic See's Careful Approach

Second, with what solicitude, attention, and caution the Apostolic See has proceeded and does proceed in this matter, can be established from nowhere other than from the very letters of Gregory XV themselves, in whose pontificate it was most diligently procured that this matter might finally be brought to the desired definition.

For this Pontiff, in letters to the Catholic King Philip IV, who was urgently pressing for this matter with his ancestral piety, thus wrote: "However, lest anything new be decreed in so great a matter, both the magnitude of the business and the example of the predecessor Roman Pontiffs advise. For we, who have been placed by God before the Christian world in the chair of

divine wisdom, must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, not examine the matter by the weights of human reasons. When eternal wisdom has opened the inner chambers of so great a mystery to its Church, the faithful ought to rest in God and in the authority of the Roman Pontiffs." Thus it is found from the book of the legation of the bishop of Cartagena, and Gravina relates it in the apologetic for the sacred deposit, chapter XII, at the end.

Letter of Gregory XV to the Most Serene Infanta Margarita

But it is preferable to hear in full the letters of the same Pontiff to the most serene Infanta Margarita de la Cruz (a rare example of this age and previous ones) formerly a nun in the royal convent of discalced nuns in Madrid. To whom concerning this matter the Pontiff thus wrote, in a brief but full style weighing so great a matter with majesty.

ATERGO

DILECTÆ IN CHRISTO

filiæ nobili mulieri, sorori Margaritæ a Cruce sanctimoniali, regis catholici amitæ,

INTUS VERO

GREGORIUS PAPA XV.

Beloved daughter in Christ, noble woman, greetings and apostolic blessing.

Those souls seem to dwell among the angelic choirs and to anticipate the joys of the blessed, who, separated from the contagion of mortal things, have devoted themselves to the Most Blessed Virgin. We hope that your Nobility is made partaker of such happiness, who, hiding away in religious cloisters, strives daily in mind to migrate to the heavenly homeland.

For we have learned from your letters and from the speech of our beloved son, the noble man Count of Monterey, with what zeal you serve the praises of the Mother of God. Thus you seem to think that you would attain the pinnacle of glory if the dissenting disputations of theologians and peoples might someday agree in one opinion of the purest conception.

But since obedience is more pleasing to the Most Blessed Mary herself than sacrifice, those truly honor her piously and wisely who subject themselves and their opinions to the laws of apostolic authority. The Holy Spirit, invoked by the most careful prayers, has not yet revealed the secret of so great a mystery to His Church. But we ought to read the volume of eternity in the chair of Christian wisdom only with Him leading. Wherefore in so grave a deliberation we judge that we should not depart at this time from the opinion of the greatest Pontiffs who have preceded us.

We certainly think that we should go to meet a certain stubborn license of minds and the continuous altercations of theologians, lest the father of discord, deceiving souls by the pretense of piety, should sometime triumph in these excessive disputations. We repel such danger by pontifical decree.

From this your Majesty will know with what ready willingness we gratify you. For we pursue you with paternal charity, who from a reigning house have transferred yourself into that sacred fellowship as an example of Christian virtues, so that you might more keenly incite those religious virgins to run along the paths of divine commandments by the imitation of your Nobility.

For all of them and for you we pray for an abundance of heavenly consolations, and we most lovingly impart the apostolic blessing.

Given at Rome at Saint Mary Major under the fisherman's ring, on the 4th day of July 1622, in the second year of our pontificate.

JOANNES CIAMPOLUS.

The Church's Teaching on the Matter

By these letters we are plainly instructed with what sobriety, gravity, and circumspection it behooves us to speak in this matter, how much we ought to be torn away from the stubbornness or tenacity of our own judgment and from adherence to our own opinions, and by the sole resignation of mind and opinions we ought to serve at the feet of Roman apostolate the most glorious and purest Virgin herself. For the Church itself teaches us that this is truly and above all most pleasing to her.

Let us therefore diligently strive to carry this out, whoever we are who profess to obey so great a Queen in true humility, purely and faithfully. Saint Thomas plainly followed this modesty, and he taught us this, and he thought in this matter in such a way that he always gave place to that meaning which is now admitted by the Church, nor did he ever contradict it.

What of Scotus himself, the most subtle and also most modest doctor, who treated this matter so soberly and cautiously that he left an admirable example to posterity concerning this matter? For when in the third book, distinction III, question I, he had ventilated this difficulty and in what ways it was possible for God to have made the soul of His purest mother pleasing and holy in the first instant of animation, descending to the question of fact, and what the ineffable mercy of God executed in that most hidden and heavenly mystery, he added these words:

"But which of these three things, which have been shown to be probable, has been done, God knows; if it does not contradict the authority of the Church or the authority of Scripture, it seems probable that what is more excellent should be attributed to Mary."

Scotus determined nothing more in this question of fact, and he taught us much in these brief words.

CERTAIN THINGS TO BE NOTED BEFOREHAND FOR DECLARING THE MEANING OF ST. THOMAS

Nothing seems to me so to commend the heavenly doctrine of St. Thomas as if we attentively inspect with what vigilance divine providence tempered the pen of the holy doctor in this matter, lest he write anything in particular

which could contradict the present state of the Church and the meaning which it has concerning the virginal conception.

Therefore two things must be diligently noted beforehand in the doctrine of St. Thomas for the light of this determination.

i. First, that St. Thomas spoke very differently when he treated in general and in common of the universality of original sin as far as concerns the force of law and with all privilege set aside, and when he brought forth judgment on this matter; and otherwise when in particular he treated of the Blessed Virgin, where it was a matter of her preservation by virtue of privilege.

For speaking by force of law, he so extended the universality of original sin that he gave place to no exception and marked the opposite with censure, as we shall immediately show. But where St. Thomas treats in particular of the Blessed Virgin herself, whether she is excepted from original sin, he nowhere imposed any censure.

ii. The second thing which we note is that St. Thomas never directly posed the question: whether the Blessed Virgin contracted original sin, or whether she was preserved, but whether she was sanctified before animation. Because in the conception of the Blessed Virgin two things are considered, namely both the person conceived as the term, and the action itself of generating or conceiving, and both are customarily and can be signified by the name of conception, St. Thomas was not concerned to inquire about the person whether she was privileged by preservation, but about the action and about the principles from which the person was generated, namely the soul or the flesh before animation, whether by their own force they induced sanctity in the person. And his concern was to exclude from the action the privilege and the lack of obligation to contract sin, for this lack followed from the very sanctity or privilege of the generative action itself.

But concerning the conceived person herself, whether she was privileged notwithstanding the action itself, or the active conception, which of itself

rushed into sin, St. Thomas did not treat much, although speaking of the opinions which were already current in his time, he spoke probably of both, as he should have spoken in that time because of the authority of the Roman Church, not yet then positively favoring but only permitting the pious opinion, and thus he remits himself to the authority of the Church, just as Scotus also did when it came to the question of fact.

The Universal Law vs. Privilege

Therefore concerning the first point which we note, it must be observed that it was necessary for St. Thomas to treat that question when he dealt with original sin, whether it passes universally to all men by force of law and with privilege set aside, because the Pelagian heresy, although at first it denied original sin in infants and affirmed that Adam's sin harmed himself alone, nevertheless afterward confessed original sin in such a way that they asserted it did not pass to all men with none excepted (they spoke by force of law, not by reason of privilege).

And when Romans 5 says: "Death passed to all men in whom all sinned," they said that "all" means the same as "many," not all with none excepted. In the same chapter they said the Apostle indicated this when he says: "Through the disobedience of one many were made sinners," and thus "all" is the same as "many." And saying of Christ: "Through the justice of one to all men in justification," "all" is not understood of all with none excepted, but of the many who are justified.

Therefore Augustine, observing this in Pelagius and Julian his disciple, asserted that it is not only against the faith to deny original sin in infants, as Pelagius first denied, but also to affirm that it does not touch all with none excepted by force of ordinary law, as Pelagius said secondly. Augustine should be seen in the book *On Nature and Grace*, chapter XLI, where he says:

"I recalled that through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed to all men in whom all sinned, and this

opinion embraces both the ancients and more recent ones, and us and those after us."

Pelagius also puts forward testimony from which he proves that when it is said "all," not always should all with none passed over be understood, just as it says "through one man's offense to all men in condemnation," so "through one's justice to all men in justification of life," since through Christ's justice, he says, it is not doubtful that not all men but only those who wished to obey him were sanctified.

"He plainly does not prove what he wants by this testimony; for as has been said, just as through one's offense to all men in condemnation, so that none would be passed over, so in what is said through one's justice to all men in justification of life none is passed over, not because all believe in him, but because no one is justified except who believes in him."

Moreover, in book VI against Julian, chapter XII, otherwise XXIV, after Augustine proved that the word "all" signifies all with none passed over, he adds:

"But you, while you wish to understand not all but many condemned through Adam or freed through Christ, resist with horrible perversity the Christian religion."

Finally, in the book *On the Perfection of Justice*, chapter XXI, tome VII, with almost the same words and under the same censure Augustine speaks as St. Thomas in I-II, question LXXXI, already cited. For Augustine says:

"Whoever thinks that there is or has been in this life any man or any men, with one exception the mediator of God and men, for whom the remission of sins was not necessary, is contrary to divine Scripture, where the Apostle says: Through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed to all men in whom all sinned. And it is necessary that he assert with impious contention that there can be men who without Christ the mediator liberating and saving are free and safe from sin."

Thus Augustine. The inference clearly follows in Pelagius's opinion: if by force of law and with privilege set aside, sin did not pass to all men with none passed over, but someone would be generated without any, then that person would not need redemption through Christ, because by the ordinary law itself he would lack sin.

St. Thomas's Necessary Teaching

From these things therefore it is manifestly deduced that when St. Thomas treated of the nature of original sin and its universality and extent to the whole human race, he had to determine against Pelagius and according to Catholic faith not only that original sin is contracted by infants, but also that this sin passes to all with none passed over, except Christ, speaking by force of law. For this second point was also asserted by Pelagius and was proposed to him to swear to as a distinct article in the Council of Palestine.

For first it was said that he should abjure that Adam's sin harmed himself alone and not the human race. Second, that through the death and transgression of Adam not the whole human race dies, and that not through the resurrection of Christ does the whole human race rise again.

Therefore St. Thomas had to explain this specially: that according to Catholic faith against Pelagius it must be confessed that all men with none excepted, except one, the mediator Christ, speaking by force of law and with privilege set aside (as St. Thomas and Augustine speak inasmuch as against Pelagius) contract original sin. And thus St. Thomas posited in I-II, question LXXXI, article III, and question IV on evil, article VI, and in IV distinction XLIII, question I, article IV, to III, and he had to affirm this under censure, because it is a Catholic dogma against the heresy of Pelagius.

And thus it is noted with the same censure by Augustine in the cited places and for the same reason which St. Thomas uses, namely because otherwise someone would not need redemption through Christ. Concerning this Augustine should also be seen in VI against Julian, chapter III, and V against Julian, chapter II, and XX *On the City of God*, chapter VI, and in the book *On Faith to Peter*, chapter XXVI.

How the Universal Words Do Not Harm Mary's Privilege

Nor do the words of St. Thomas and Augustine, so universal and placed under censure, in any way harm or touch the singular privilege of the Most Blessed Virgin. For when some law is made universally for all, it is said in the full rigor of truth that that law comprehends all with none passed over, even if someone is excepted by privilege. For these two things do not fight among themselves: that by force of law all are comprehended, and by force of privilege someone is exempted.

Rather the nature of privilege supposes that by force of law the opposite is owed; otherwise it would not be a privilege if it did not except from the universality of the law. For in this sense Augustine said excellently in Epistle L: "That dispensation is a wound against the integrity of severity."

Therefore privilege does not take away universality by force of law, but supposes it; however it excepts by force of privilege. Whence in Esther 15 King Ahasuerus said: "This law was not made for you, but for all." Where it would seem more appropriate to have said "not for you, but for the rest," yet he did not say thus, but "for all," so that it might be understood to stand very well that the law is for all universally, although it is not for someone.

By force of ordinary law all incur sin with Christ alone excepted, and yet in no way is the singular privilege of the Virgin harmed.

Interpretations of St. Thomas's Teaching

I know that Cajetan and Medina on that place from the I-II take the proposition of St. Thomas in this sense: that it is only of faith that all men contract original sin as to the obligation, not in fact; just as it is of faith that all men have the obligation of dying, yet it is not of faith but in opinion whether some will not in fact die, namely those who will be found at the very end of the world.

However, the more common interpretation of St. Thomas is that St. Thomas speaks in that universal proposition by force of ordinary law, always leaving place for privilege. Thus judge Ferrariensis in IV *Contra*

Gentiles, chapter L; Zumel on I-II, question LXXXI, article III, single question; Lorea and Alvarez in the same place; Father Azor, tome I, *Institutions*, book IV, chapter XXXIV; Salas, tome II, on I-II, tract XIII, disputation XI, section V, question XI; Valencia, I-II, disputation VI, question XI, point II; Montesinos, I-II, question LXXXI, article III, disputation XI, question VIII, number CLXXXIV; Cornelius a Lapide on the Epistle to the Romans, chapter V.

In the same way they explain the universal propositions of the saints, that they speak by force of law, not by force of privilege: Paramo, book III *On the Edict of Faith*, question V; Bellarmine, book IV *On the Loss of Grace*, chapter XVI; Egidius a Præsentatione, *On the Immaculate Conception*, book III, question IV, especially article II, and question V following; Suarez, II tome, III part, disputation III, section V; Vazquez, II tome on III part, disputation CXVII, chapter X and following.

Wherefore from that universal proposition of St. Thomas and its censure, which only regards what is comprehended by force of ordinary law, no prejudice or censure results against that opinion which by privilege grants to the Blessed Virgin preservation from sin, not by force of law. But the prohibition of the Apostolic See in censuring is only concerning the pious opinion which says by privilege that the Blessed Virgin was preserved, not by force of ordinary law which is for all.

Whence when St. Thomas treats of the Blessed Virgin in particular he does not censure, although he uses the same reason, because otherwise she would not need the redemption of Christ, as is evident from I, question XXVII, article II, and in III distinction III, question I, article I, and other places to be adduced below.

The Second Point: Types of Sanctification

Concerning the second point which we said must be noted in St. Thomas, this must be kept before our eyes: that he well observed all the ways in which this sanctification of the Virgin could occur, not only in the ordinary way as happens in other men from sin, but also by preservation lest she fall

into it, or even through some grace before animation, either conferred on the soul or purifying the seminal material or the embryo. This Seraphinus a Porrecta well observed on III, question XXVII, article II.

But St. Thomas was concerned to exclude not so much the preservation itself of the person of the Virgin in the real instant of her production, as the preservation of the flesh or soul, so that by virtue of the active conception or generation that person would be rendered holy. But in herself insofar as she is a singular and produced person, she would not need the grace of liberation, nor would she have the obligation of incurring it, but would be made entirely pleasing either to the parents or to the action or to the principles themselves from which that person was to result, that is, to the flesh or to the soul before animation.

This was the intention of St. Thomas, and therefore he always inquired whether she was sanctified before animation. But that the person herself already produced, who by force and mode of her conception had the obligation of incurring sin, in fact did not incur sin, St. Thomas was not much concerned about this, but gave place to both opinions for the Church, to which alone it belongs to judge this question of fact.

St. Thomas's Key Texts Examined

But this will become evident from the very places of St. Thomas where he treats this question expressly, in which we shall see that he also recognized preservative redemption, and especially intended to deny that this grace would not be done for the parents or nature, but if it were done, it ought to be done for the person of the Virgin herself in particular. Whether the person herself produced requires only the obligation or the sin, so that she may be said to be redeemed and liberated, and not only the sin.

And first there occurs for this a notable place of St. Thomas in IV Sentences, distinction XLII, question I, article IV, to III, and it is found in the additions to III, question LXXVIII, article I, to III. St. Thomas had proposed the argument that at some time God will grant this to the Church, that men may be born without original sin, because the Church asks that its debts be

forgiven, and so that it may fully attain this petition, it is necessary that at some time it fully attain the forgiveness of debts, which will not be unless some man is conceived without original sin.

St. Thomas responds: "That it is erroneous to say that anyone is conceived without original sin (except Christ), because thus he would not need redemption through Christ." And he adds:

"Nor can it be said that they did not need this redemption, because it was granted to them that they be conceived without sin (behold the preservative grace or redemption), because that grace was done to the parents, so that the vice of nature might be healed in them, with which remaining they could not generate without original sin, or to the nature itself which is healed. But it is necessary to posit that each person personally needs the redemption of Christ, not only by reason of nature. But to be freed from evil or absolved from obligation cannot happen except to one who has incurred the obligation or has been cast down into evil (behold he distinguishes contracting evil or only the obligation). And thus all could not receive in themselves the fruit of the Lord's redemption unless all were born debtors and subject to evil. Whence the forgiveness of debts and liberation from evil cannot be understood unless someone is born without debt or immune from evil, etc."

Thus St. Thomas, where it must be pondered that St. Thomas denies that preservative grace which would be done only to the parents or to nature, not to the person itself, because he considers it a great inconvenience that any person in itself personally does not need redemption, but the grace which is done to it is in the parents or to the nature itself, or to the principles of nature, namely to the soul or to the flesh before the person is constituted and before animation.

Second, it must be pondered that for liberation through Christ, St. Thomas disjunctively requires either obligation or guilt in the one who is to be redeemed. Therefore if St. Thomas effectively saves redemption through Christ in someone who would only be born with obligation, he no longer requires more when he speaks of the Virgin and infers as an inconvenience

that otherwise she would not need redemption through Christ. For he understands that she would not need it if she were conceived without obligation or without sin, yet not if she were conceived without sin, provided she were conceived with obligation in the person.

And as often as St. Thomas infers that she would not need redemption, "would not need" is because obligation is also included; for if this is given, it suffices for the need of liberation, as is gathered from this place. And thus this place especially illuminates the mind of St. Thomas to be inspected in other places.

Comparison of St. Thomas's Earlier and Later Texts

Next, it is necessary to compare among themselves the places of St. Thomas from III Sentences and from III part, so that it may be established how he himself distinguished this preservative grace and how he denied it. For in III distinction, question I, article I, in the first little question he inquires whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before the conception of the flesh was finished, that is, while that flesh was under the form of an embryo or in seminal material. And he responds negatively.

In the second little question he inquires whether she was sanctified before the infusion of the soul. And responding to this question he says: "To the second, that the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin could not decorously be before the infusion of the soul, because she was not yet capable of grace; but neither even in the very instant of infusion, so that by the grace then infused to her she might be preserved lest she incur original guilt."

Behold, most manifestly St. Thomas recognizes preservative grace lest the stain be incurred in that instant of the infusion of the soul, and he distinguishes it from that grace which would be done to the Virgin before animation and the constitution of the person, whether in her parents or in the material of her body, or in the soul. For he treats these as distinct difficulties.

And the same is gathered from III to Annibald, distinction III, question I, article I, where he says: "That neither before conception nor in conception

before animation, nor in the very instant of the infusion of the soul, was she sanctified." He therefore distinguishes all these modes of sanctification, both before the instant of animation and in the very instant in which the person would already be preserved or conserved lest she incur sin, and not only the action itself or the material of the body or the parent be preserved lest they generate offspring in sin.

St. Thomas's Development of Thought

Although St. Thomas in these places of the third book of Sentences excluded all these modes of sanctification, nevertheless afterward, that is, in IV Sentences cited and in III, question XXVII, article II, he either suppressed and omitted this last mode of preservative sanctification in the same instant of the infusion of the soul, or explained it.

He suppressed it indeed in the cited III part where he says: "That the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin cannot be understood before her animation," and he concludes: "And thus in whatever way the Blessed Virgin had been sanctified before animation, she would never have incurred the stain of original guilt, and thus she would not need redemption through Christ."

Where the holy doctor by "would have incurred the stain" understands also the obligation, both from the explanation given above from IV Sentences, and because he speaks in the case of sanctification before animation, in which case she personally would not be liable, but in her person she would lack all obligation, and from the adjoined reason, because she would not have needed redemption. But the word "to need" always refers to obligation, as we showed from St. Thomas. For one who has the obligation, even if not the sin, needs to be redeemed, or needs a liberator from the danger in which he is, which St. Thomas denies.

Wherefore in this place of III part he entirely omitted that mode of preservative sanctification for the same instant, and thus he only speaks in the case before animation saying: "And thus in whatever way before animation, etc."

But he explained in IV Sentences, distinction XLIII, cited, that for liberation and redemption either obligation in the person or guilt suffices. And thus if the Blessed Virgin was preserved from guilt, provided she had the obligation in the person, there is nothing against St. Thomas. And thus these two places, because they are later than those cited from III Sentences, more fully explain the mind of the holy doctor, as we are now doing.

(ST. THOMAS CONFORMS HIMSELF TO THE MIND OF THE CHURCH)

St. Thomas's Awareness of the Controversy

From these preliminaries it will be clearly established concerning the mind of the holy doctor, which, if it had been attentively considered and inspected by comparing his various passages, nothing sinister would ever have been suspected of him in this matter.

And so St. Thomas found that already in his time this difficulty was being controverted, and many were inclining toward the immaculate conception of the Virgin, and not a few churches were celebrating this feast from the toleration of the Roman Church, yet the Roman Church itself was not yet celebrating it. Whence he was especially concerned about one point which in this matter is more serious and considerable, and especially pertaining to Christian doctrine, namely lest the grace of sanctification which was attributed to the conception of the Virgin be so sinisterly understood by some that this grace would not be said to be done to the person of the Virgin herself.

But whatever this grace or benefit may be, it ought to be done to the person of the Virgin herself, not to the parents by healing the vice of nature, not to the active or preparative conception and the mixing of seeds, not to the embryo, finally not to the soul, nor to the flesh before animation and the constitution of the person. St. Thomas especially wished this to be observed, and in this he placed all his study, because he saw that if in this

matter some sinister understanding took root and it were once admitted that this benefit is not done to the person of the Virgin herself, a great principle in the faith would be destroyed: that there would be given some person among men who in herself personally, or by reason of her person, would not need the redemption of Christ.

The Necessity of Obligation in the Person

But for this it was necessary to posit some obligation or danger in the person itself, from which if she were not held, she would not be liberated. On account of which in these two places which seem to be the final determinations in St. Thomas, namely the cited distinction XLIII and III, question XXVII, article II, he was only concerned lest this grace and benefit of sanctification be done to the Virgin before animation, so that it would not be done to the person herself, but antecedently to the existence of the person, either to the parents themselves, or to the active conception, or to the flesh while it was being generated, or to the soul before infusion, for these are not yet the person.

With this point established, which was especially the care of St. Thomas and in which he balanced the whole weight of his reasoning, namely because otherwise she would not need redemption in her person if she did not at least have the obligation—in which Scotus also agrees, while he posits that the Virgin could only be liberated in a real instant and in an instant of nature be with the obligation, as is evident in the third book, distinction III, question I, §. "If however," responding to the second reply—with this, I say, established, as to the rest, namely whether, having the obligation in her person, she in fact did not contract guilt but the Blessed Virgin was preserved in the real instant of her animation, St. Thomas gave place to both opinions because it was a question of fact.

St. Thomas's Deference to the Roman Church

But because he saw that the Church was not yet celebrating but only tolerating that feast, adhering to the Roman Church, he wished to save her reasoning. But the reason by which the Roman Church was then led was

that which the holy doctor brings forward in Quodlibet VI, question V, article II: "Because the Roman Church," he says, "and many others, considering that the conception of the Virgin was in original sin, do not celebrate the feast of the conception."

If therefore the Church then considered and thought this, how could the holy doctor not incline more to this side, because thus the Roman Church then thought, whose mind the holy doctor ought to defend? For in determining a question of fact such as this was, it was necessary to await the judgment of the Church and not be led by the weights of human reasons, as Gregory XV, mentioned above, teaches in his letters.

Therefore in the question of fact St. Thomas did not wish to follow anything other than what the Roman Church then judged and thought, in whose authority the faithful ought to rest. But nevertheless, so that he might also give place to the other opinion as far as the Church then permitted, he added in III, question XXVII, articles II and III: "That because the Roman Church tolerated the celebration of that feast, it was not to be totally rejected."

Behold how St. Thomas always adheres to the mind of the Roman Church, always honors her, always saves her.

Application to the Present Time

Whence since now the Roman Church not only tolerates but also positively commands that such a feast be celebrated, and pursues it with great favors, speaking apparently, by force of the doctrine of St. Thomas and the pious opinion, it is necessary to judge vice versa concerning these opinions, and St. Thomas would judge thus piously. For if from the mere toleration of the Roman Church that festivity was then not to be spurned, by positive precept and favor, how much more would he say it is to be venerated?

Especially since in the "sed contra" argument, which St. Thomas only uses as probable, he proves from this that the Blessed Virgin was born without sin, because her nativity is celebrated by the Church, as is evident in the

same question XXVII, article I. Therefore he would say the same thing about the conception if it were then celebrated in the same way as the nativity.

For that time therefore St. Thomas judged thus as the Roman Church thought; but for this time he would think what she thinks and in the mode in which she thinks. For in these questions of fact, according to different times, judgment varies and knowledge of things grows gradually.

Response to an Objection from the Sentences

But what some bring forward from the first book of Sentences, distinction XLIV, question I, article I, to III, where St. Thomas says: "Such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin who was immune from original and actual sin"—there, just as "immune" falling upon actual sin excludes all its contagion, so falling upon original sin it ought to exclude all its contraction.

It is responded that St. Thomas says this either because he favored both opinions which were then current in the Church, one as tolerated by the Roman Church, the other as asserted, although for the honor and obedience of that Church St. Thomas more and more often inclined toward the asserted than toward the tolerated. Or that word "immune" is taken in a general way for immunity, either preserving or liberating, and thus that word is not entirely express nor does it fully declare the mind of the holy doctor, especially because there he only touched this matter in passing and incidentally. But the mind of any author must be investigated from the places in which he treats some matter expressly.

Support from Other Thomists

And thus Porrecta holds this opinion of ours in III, question XXVII, article II, and Master Medina should be seen on the same place, also defending the pious opinion probably. And Cajetan considers it as probable in tome II of opuscula, tract I, chapter V. And Master Soto, speaking in chapter V of the Epistle to the Romans according to the custom of the celebration of this which now exists in the Church, says:

"That the exception of the Blessed Virgin from this universal statement of Paul is so celebrated not only among the common people but among good doctors, especially the most illustrious Parisians, that if there are some who cannot persuade themselves of this exception, as to whom Paul seems to contradict, nevertheless they ought not publicly to put forth such a disputation."

Thus Soto. Which things I have said so that it may be established that illustrious Thomists following St. Thomas do not adhere much in this question of fact, nor are more rooted in it than the mind of the Church requires.

Answer to Another Objection from the Quodlibet

You will say: In the cited Quodlibet VI, St. Thomas expressly says that the Blessed Virgin was included in that universal "in whom all sinned": "From which Christ alone is excepted, who was not in Adam according to seminal reason; otherwise, if this belonged to another than Christ, he would not need the redemption of Christ." Therefore he uses that consequence of not needing redemption not only to prove that one has the obligation, but also the sin.

It is responded that the words of St. Thomas must be attended to. For he says that from that universal only Christ is excepted, who was not in Adam according to seminal reason; otherwise, if this belonged to another, that is, if it belonged to him not to be in Adam according to seminal reason (for that is what the pronoun "this" refers to and demonstrates), and thus he would not contract sin, he would not need the redemption of Christ, which is most manifest. For whoever did not descend from Adam by seminal reason would have no obligation of incurring sin nor need of redemption, since by force of law he ought not contract sin.

Whence St. Thomas directly proved that not only does he not need redemption who in fact does not contract sin in his person, but he who does not contract it because he is not in Adam according to seminal reason, and

thus has no obligation of contracting, and thus the negation of the need of redemption always excludes the obligation according to St. Thomas.

St. Thomas's Position Based on the Church's Mind

But because, as he relates in that Quodlibet, the Roman Church and other churches then thought that the Blessed Virgin in fact contracted sin, and therefore do not celebrate that feast, therefore he did not posit preservative redemption there but ordinary redemption, just as in other places. Yet he was not much concerned about this, that he did not also give place to the other opinion in other places, as we have seen.

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS CONCERNING THIS PROPOSITION

Response to the First Objection

From these things are left explained those things which were objected against St. Thomas in this matter in the preceding article when we recounted those things which are noted in St. Thomas.

And so to the first objection we say that St. Thomas in those words does not in any way censure the assertion of the pious opinion, but only opposes himself to that assertion of Pelagius, which said, speaking by force of law, that not all sinned in Adam with none passed over, but only many. Against these St. Thomas directs his censure, as we have seen. But this censure is not against those who say that by privilege the Blessed Virgin was preserved, not by force of law, as has been sufficiently shown.

Response to the Second Objection

To the second objection, in which it is objected that St. Thomas, when he says that the feast of sanctification should be celebrated rather than of conception, contradicts the decree of Gregory XV commanding that it be celebrated everywhere under the name of conception, it is responded that this is objected altogether foolishly and unwisely.

i. First indeed, because St. Thomas does not there give the reason for the celebration of this feast in the mode in which the Roman Church now does it, but he gives the reason why the Roman Church then tolerated that celebration in other churches, yet she herself did not celebrate it. And he says she did this then because she attended more to the sanctification than to the conception. Which reason is excellent with respect to that toleration which existed in the time of St. Thomas, for which case the decree of Gregory does not speak. But now the Church not only tolerates but also commands that feast, in which case St. Thomas does not speak. Whence therefore is there contrariety between the saying of St. Thomas and the decree of Gregory?

ii. Second, because it is one thing to deal with the name or title under which this feast ought to be celebrated, another thing with the reason for celebrating. Concerning the name, St. Thomas does not deny, but rather admits that the festivity of the conception is not to be rejected (behold the title or name under which it is celebrated). But concerning the reason for celebration he said it is rather a feast of sanctification than of conception. And this is true, because the Church does not celebrate concerning anyone except by reason of sanctity.

And Gregory XV commands that it be celebrated under the name of conception, but says nothing about the reason for celebrating.

iii. Third, that restrictive phrase "rather celebrates the feast of sanctification than of conception" does not deny that the conception is to be celebrated; indeed "rather" supposes that it is also celebrated, but shows that it obtains a more important reason for celebration. For it is one thing to attend rather to the sanctification, another thing to exclude the conception.

And Cardinal Bellarmine in tome II, III, *On the Cult of the Saints*, chapter XVI, says that the principal foundation of this feast is not the immaculate conception, but simply the conception of the future Mother of God; for whatever that conception may have been, by the very fact that it was the conception of the Mother of God, it brings singular joy to the world. If therefore this is the principal foundation, whatever the conception may

have been, why should St. Thomas, because he said that the sanctification rather than the conception is celebrated, that is, that the principal foundation is the sanctification, be censured by the holy doctor without cause?

iv. Finally, this pertains only to a question of fact, in which a change can occur according to different statutes of the Church. At that time the Roman Church had not decreed that it be celebrated under the name of conception, nor did she herself celebrate it. Now both she celebrates and decrees it. St. Thomas gave the reason and narration of what was current in his time. What the Church decrees at another time, that is, now, is not contrary to it. Nor does Gregory IV determine what was celebrated in the time of St. Thomas. Whence therefore are they contrary?